

This week, US Congressman Mike Honda (CA-15) announced the nomination and appointment of five students from California's 15th District to the U.S. Service Academies:

**U.S. Naval Academy – Annapolis**

**Christine Baldrige**

**Jonathan Bangsal**

**U.S. Air Force Academy – Colorado Springs**

**Rahni Giardina**

**William Parks**

**U.S. Military Academy – West Point**

**Bryan Houpp**

**"I am pleased to have nominated these outstanding individuals to attend some of our nation's most prestigious schools. Each student has demonstrated a true commitment to serving our country and personifies the patriotism necessary to lead it," said Congressman Honda, who will recognize his nominees at a special ceremony being hosted at his district office on Friday, June 17, 2011 at 5:30pm. This event is open to the media.**

Congressman Honda's Service Academy Advisory Board interviewed all the applicants earlier this year and made recommendations to Congressman Honda. The selection of nominees was made after a rigorous interview process wherein applicants were evaluated based on their grades, test scores, community service, leadership potential and life experiences.

The Service Academy Advisory Board is comprised of current and retired military officers/academy graduates who represent the diversity of California's 15th Congressional District. Congressman Honda selected board members based on his values of diversity and inclusion. This year's Board membership includes:

U.S. Air Force Lt Col Lisa Hillhouse

U.S. Marine Corps LtCol Sean Day (USNA Class of 1994)\*

U.S. Navy LT John Mui, Ret. (USNA Class of 1995)

U.S. Army CPT Beach Pace, Ret. (USMA Class of 1991)

“It is my honor to serve on such a diverse Service Academy Selections Board – representing many walks of life, service academies and military careers – and to help select our nation’s future military leaders,” said U.S. Army CPT Beach Pace, Ret. (USMA Class of 1991), who now serves as the Executive Director of City Year San Jose/Silicon Valley. “I thoroughly enjoyed working with my academy counterparts in recommending nominations to Congressman Mike Honda. With each thoughtful deliberation over each candidate, the selections committee board knows that we will impact generations of service members to come.”

Students must apply and be accepted into the Service Academy while simultaneously pursuing and securing a nomination from the President, Vice President, their Senator, their Representative, or a Service Branch Secretary.

Congressman Honda officially sent his nominations for these five outstanding students in January. He is pleased to recognize his nominees at a special ceremony being hosted at his district office on Friday, June 17, 2011 at 5:30pm. This event is open to the media.

### **Background on the nominees and future military officers:**

Christine Baldridge graduated from Westmont High School in 2009. This was her third interview with Congressman Honda’s Service Academy Advisory Board. After her first interview, she enrolled at San Jose State University and enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. She applied last year and was given a nomination. Christine was admitted to the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, RI.

Jonathan Bangsal graduated from Milpitas High School in 2008. This was his third interview with the Service Academy Advisory Board. Jonathan secured a nomination last year and through his personal life experiences and sheer determination, Jonathan was admitted to the Naval Academy, Class of 2015.

Rahni Giardina graduated from Gilroy High School in 2010. She is an all star soccer player with exceptional grades and test scores. She spent her last year at the Air Force Academy Preparatory School, where she further developed her academics and leadership skills. Much of her passion for public service derives from her mother, who is a Public Safety Officer.

William Parks graduated from Archbishop Mitty High School in 2011. He is an exceptional student with a 4.5 GPA. William is an all star water polo player and was a part of the U.S. Junior National Space Modeling Team where he competed against other students in developing rockets.

Bryan Houpp graduated from Valley Christian High School in 2011. Bryan was captain of his football team and self professed “History Nerd.” He served as Valley Christian’s Student Body Vice President, graduated with 4.3 GPA and is highly commitment to volunteerism.

\*LtCol Sean Day has been a member of Congressman Honda’s Advisory Board since 2009. He is currently deployed in Afghanistan and was unable to serve on Honda’s Advisory Board this year. Congressman Honda wishes him a safe deployment and is excited to have Lt Col Day

rejoin his Board next year.

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